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DE RUEHTG #1219/01 3331637

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1198
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RUMIAAA/US SOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIASS/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIASS/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001219

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KDEM HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: ELECTIONS SITREP 1000 HOURS

¶11. (SBU) Summary. Polls opened nationwide with some delays and voting has begun in a generally orderly fashion. There has been a heavy turnout and voters are enthusiastic. The atmosphere in the capital of Tegucigalpa is quiet and normal. Embassy reporting teams deployed nationwide reported no security incidents. End Summary.

THE POLLS

¶12. (SBU) Ambassador, accompanied by the DCM and USAID Director, visited thirty working class polling stations, among which his security detail was voting, as of 10:00 on November 29 and found poll workers to be following procedures. The Ambassador reported that voter turnout was very heavy and voters were enthusiastic. Embassy reporting teams deployed nationwide reported delays in the opening of polling centers ranging from ten to sixty minutes. Embassy teams reported that the situations at their locations were quiet and voting was proceeding in an orderly fashion. Embassy team in San Pedro Sula/Villanueva reported that the polling center they were observing was to be located in a private school, but when the balloting material arrived at 04:00 on November 29 the school director refused to allow the facility to be used because he does not support the elections. Emboffs watched as polling center was peacefully re-located to a school about 100 meters away from the original site and the first vote was cast at 07:50. Students would not allow the Pedagogical University in Tegucigalpa to be used as a polling center and polling stations to be located there were transferred to two schools in Tegucigalpa. Embassy watcher reported transfer process was not flawless and some voters encountered difficulty finding their stations. Students at the Autonomous University of Honduras in Tegucigalpa also refused to allow the facility to be utilized as a voting center and the polling stations to be located there were transferred to an engineering institute.

REGIONAL ISSUES

¶13. (U) Nicaragua closed its border with Honduras at 06:00 on November 28 and it will remain closed until the morning of November 30.

SECURITY

¶4. (SBU) At 09:00, the military received reports of road spikes ("megalitos") being thrown on the main road between Tegucigalpa and Choluteca.

¶5. (SBU) An explosion occurred at Audio/Video near Hospital Escuela in the capital of Tegucigalpa around 23:00 on November 27; reportedly there were no injuries. A bomb was launched from a motorcycle during the night of November 27 against Radio America. Police told Embassy employee on November 28 that they detained two Hondurans in connection with the attack against Radio America. According to the police, they said President Zelaya paid them USD 12000 to carry out the attack.

¶6. (U) Three small bombs went off outside schools in the country's second largest city, San Pedro Sula, the early morning of November 27. Three youths threw a molotov cocktail at or under a concrete bench about 100 yards away from the Instituto Primero de Mayo school, a polling center, in San Pedro Sula at 15:00 on November 28. There were no injuries.

¶7. (SBU) Embassy received information regarding a possible threat against U.S. airlines flying into Tegucigalpa on election day. The Embassy advised its employees not to fly those carriers on that date and issued a warden message.

HUMAN RIGHTS

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¶8. (SBU) The Center for Women's Rights and Mary McCann, the Amcit wife of the Honduran executive director of NGO Red Comal, separately told Emboff on November 28 that approximately 45 members of the Honduran FBI, police, and military entered the office Red Comal around 13:00 on November 28 in Siquatepeque, located in the Francisco Morazan department and searched through the office. McCann told Emboff that the police presented a search warrant allowing them to search for weapons and that they did not find any and that Red Comal staff reported that a policeman accused the NGO of hiding guerrillas and guns. McCann said the security forces left the office at 17:30 on November 28 and confiscated four computers, money, and lists of participants at workshops run by the NGO, which they told NGO staff would be taken to the local Public Ministry office. Embassy expressed its concern to the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights and the military on November 28.

¶9. (U) Human rights NGO COFADEH reported to Emboff on November 28 that her organization received two reports of alleged human rights violations the evening of November 27. Unknown security forces allegedly shot two members of the anti-coup resistance movement on the road near the Armed Forces General Staff headquarters in Tegucigalpa on November 27. A member of the resistance movement was allegedly detained in the department of Lempira on November 27 and threatened by security forces into distributing election material. COFADEH further reported on November 29 that the police leveled the homes of two resistance leaders in Gualala; no further details were available. Embassy is following up to gather more information on these incidents

¶10. (U) Human rights NGO CIPRODEH called Emboff at 21:00 on November 28 and reported that the military had encircled the "Guadalupe Carney" community near Trujillo in the Colon department, which recently won title to land in the area. A member of a visiting human rights delegation from the U.S. called Emboff at 22:45 on November 28 and said she received similar reports. Emboff unsuccessfully tried to call a contact in Guadalupe Carney on November 28. Embassy is following up to gather more information on this report.

